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ABSTRACT

This report represents the record of project activity which has not already been detailed in the First Milestone Report of October 1974 and the second milestone project, "Exploring Teachers' Centers." The National Institute of Education Group on School Capacity for Problem Solving (GSCPS) has conducted a survey to study grass roots teachers' centers as instances of locally generated and designed attempts to change schooling. A teacher center is defined as a program providing continuing education for practicing teachers (mostly elementary teachers), which aims to be responsive to teachers' own definitions of their continuing learning needs rather than to the imposed agendas of school administrators, college professors, or curriculum committees. This study recommends that the GSCPS bring these several strands of interested people together by establishing a small agnecy that could sustain the informal networking now existent. An exchange for and about teachers' centers should be designed not as a technical assistance agency but as a networking to perform the following functions: (1) collect, write, and circulate information about teachers' centers; (2) set up an information central to receive and respond to requests for information and to make referrals among people interested in teachers' centers; (3) arrange for and subsidize personnel exchanges and meetings among educators experienced in and interested in teachers' centers; and (4) document activities pursuant to the above functions and conduct research about the effects on networking and about teachers' centers as a form of inservice education. (A questionnaire and analysis of replies; a list of teachers' centers; and a report of networking documentation are contained in the appendixes.) (SK)

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FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A NATIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SHARING AGENCY AMONG TEACHERS' CENTERS

Final Report
for the National Institute of Education
(Group on School Capacity for Problem Solving)
Contract No. NE-C-00-3-0109

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SUMMARY

A 15-month study of the natural informal network of American teachers' centers concludes that the network is characterized by decentralized structure and voluntary participation among educators sharing common premises and purposes relating to practicing teachers' continuing professional development.

> Teachers must be more than technicians, must continue to be learners. Long-lasting improvements in education will come through inservice programs that identify individual starting points for learning in each teacher, build on teacher's motivation to take more, not less, responsibility for curriculum and instruction decisions in the school and the classroom; and welcome teachers to participate in the design of professional development programs.

The project-produced book, Exploring Teachers' Centers, and the project staff's experience in providing information and referral services have produced significant expressions of interest in more widespread information and resource exchanges among teachers' centers, inservice specialists in school districts and state departments of education, and professors of education.

At the same time the National Institute of Education (Group on School Capacity for Problem Solving), which has funded this feasibility study, has declared its intent to study grass roots teachers' centers as instances of locally generated and designed attempts to change schooling, and also has declared its interest in studying the phenomenon of informal information networks as an alternative form of disseminating education innovations.

The study's basic recommendation is that the GSCPS bring these "several strands of interest together by establishing a small agency that could sustain the informal networking now existent; elaborate the kinds of information and resources being shared; extend the network to others holding the same basic premises attributed to teacher' centers, and maintain documentation that could be used both to study networking as a new form of education diffusion, and to study the premises, practice, and productivity of teachers' centers as a form of professional development."

An Exchange for and about Teachers' Centers should be designed not as a technical assistance agency but as a networking facility, performing the following functions:

> 1. Collect, write, and circulate information materials about teachers' centers: books, monographs, curriculum materials, audiovisual materials, bibliographies, etc.; 2. Set up an 'information central' to receive and respond to requests for information and to make referrals among people interested in teachers' centers; 3. Arrange for and subsidize personnel exchanges and meetings among educators experienced in and interested in teachers' centers; 4. Document activities pursuant to the above functions and conduct research about the effects of networking and about teachers' centers as a form of inservice education.

FINAL REPORT OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY ON
NETWORKING AMONG TEACHERS' CENTERS

This report presents the record of project activity which has not already been detailed in the First Milestone Report of October 1974 and the second milestone product, Exploring Teachers' Centers, which we published last June. Both these documents are cited frequently in the pages which follow.

This report is in several sections. The first is a summary of responses to the 198 questionnaires which were circulated in June along with copies of Exploring, the second is a summary of the documentations we have kept about the information exchanges we have been involved in since January 1975, and the third section contains our recommendations for a networking organization among teachers' centers.

At the outset we emphasize the definitions of terms which we stated in the earlier publications. In our usage of "teachers' center" we emphasize again that our use of the apostrophe, connoting the possessive, sets apart those centers we have in mind from other organizations calling themselves "teacher center" or "teaching center." On page 3 of Exploring we stated that a teachers' center

> is a program providing continuing education for practicing teachers (mostly elementary teachers) which aims to be responsive to teachers' own definitions of their continuing learning needs rather than to school administrators', college professors' or curriculum committees' imposed agendas. Such a program may be a place where teachers come to work together and receive instruction, or share self-instruction, or it may be a staff of advisors who go out to help teachers in their schools, working in the same spirit of finding teachers' own starting points for improvement. Thus the widely used term advisory is incorporated within our embracing definition of teachers' center.

We stated that teachers' centers are similar in several ways:

1. They offer teachers fresh curriculum materials and/or lesson ideas, emphasizing active, exploratory, frequently individualized classroom work, not textbook and workbook study.

2. These programs engage teachers in making their own curriculum materials, building classroom apparatus, or involve them in some entirely new learning pursuit of their own so as to reacquaint them with the experience of being active, exploratory learners themselves.

3. Teachers' centers instructors are themselves classroom teachers, sharing their own practical, classroom-developed materials; or they are advisors--formerly classroom teachers--who view their job as stimulating, supporting, and extending a teacher in her own directions of growth, not implementing a new instructional model or strategy.

4. Attendance at teachers' center classes is voluntary, not prescribed by the school district; or if indirectly required (for instance, as a way to spend release time or to earn advancement credits), programs offered are based on teachers' expressions of their own training needs, and several choices are offered.

Another meaning which underlies our recommendations is our understanding of "network," which in Exploring we credited to Matthew Miles and to David Clark and Egon Guba. Thus, on page 5 we talked of our experience of

> a nation-wide, loose but operating hookup among teachers' centers that meets Matthew Miles' definition of a 'network': 'A dispersed structure permitting low-energy access to trusted competence. Appropriate information, energy and other resources can be easily located from physically dispersed nodes to solve local problems.'

Further, we emphasized Clark and Guba's differentiation of a network or a "configuration" from a system, and expressed our view that teachers' centers produce, disseminate, and adapt "new knowledge" in configurational rather than systematic ways:

> Thus this network of teachers' centers is decentralized in structure; the functions it performs are independent and disconnected from each other, not 'linked and sequential'; the roles which people play as they participate in networking are 'overlapping' not 'discrete'; participants' goals are 'emergent and indiosyncratic'; they view their primary function as 'keeping school' not producing research; authority and responsibility are negotiated among the participants; not delegated by a leader; members participate from intrinsic motivation to get help with local needs, not for the sake of networking; communications may not be 'synergistic and permanent' but rather 'symbiotic and temporary'--people will interact only so long as they need each other.

All of the above characteristics of a network remain directly relevant to our thinking about teachers' centers' communications. Since then we have also read Allen Parker's analysis of how "interactive networks" spread new education practices. We believe this analysis also is applicable to the network of teachers' centers we have observed. New insights and innovations are disseminated informally, Parker says, among organizations which share broad purposes but which may disagree about means for implementing them.

> Because we cannot determine the 'best' innovation to achieve the goal of an interactive network does not mean that we cannot accomplish the spread of many innovations which appear to be promising. In fact, since there cannot be a 'best' innovation given disagreement concerning objectives and operational limits, the partial diffusion of many similar innovations can provide evidence about which innovations are 'good' for which objectives and conditions... No one group or individual is threatened by this informal evaluation process because their practices are never openly designated as inferior and because, not having been forced to defend their practices during a formal evaluation, they are free to change them. Because no unit in the network will be pressured to change, all interested units are likely to participate in the dialogue concerning various insights, practices and innovations.
>
> A continuing interactive flow of new ideas and of observations about the impact of insights and innovations can thus be maintained. This flow is interactive in that the developers of insights and innovations, the network's staff, and all other interested participants 'act upon each other' as equals in discussions and experiments to refine the insights and innovations, rather than being 'experts' who develop innovations, versus staff who disseminate them, versus interested participants who accept or reject them....*

Section 1. Responses to the book, Exploring Teachers' Centers

A total of 198 questionnaires was circulated in June 1975 along with copies of the book, which presented information and descriptions of 22 teachers' centers and discussed themes of their relationship to broader issues in inservice education. The book was intended to serve as stimulus to further information exchanges and was circulated to experienced centers, fledgling centers, and other persons interested in alternative forms of inservice education: college of education professors, state education department officials, and local school district supervisors responsible for inservice. The 25 questionnaires returned so far by readers indicate that 1) information about specific teachers' centers is valued and the format in which information was presented is endorsed by readers; and 2) several functions suggested for a teachers' centers networking agency in the First Milestone Report are endorsed as potentially valuable by a wider audience, if no cost to users is required. These functions are (as stated in the questionnaire): "a) continuing descriptions of centers, new program trends, reviews of the literature; b) inquiry center to answer questions, make referrals to people and places with expertise,

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* Parker, L. Allen. Interactive Networks for Champions of Innovation. Cambridge: Center for Educational Policy Research, Harvard Graduate School of Education, unpublished manuscript, April 1971, 195-197 .

and link people with shared concerns; c) exchange of curriculum materials, program reports, research monographs, films, relating to teachers' centers;" and "e) facilitation of short or extended visits to centers by people new to the concept, staff exchanges among centers, internships in centers for people wanting to start their own centers." The other functions proposed in the questionnaire received scattered endorsements: "d) task force or study group on problems of governance, finance, in teachers' centers," and "f) sponsorship of institutes or study groups on topics such as curriculum development for inservice education/teachers' centers; centers/ input into state certification requirements; school district/university collaboration for inservice."

However this body of response to Exploring is as yet too slim to draw firm conclusions. Because the book was not mailed until the middle of June, we suppose that many respondents have not yet seen it. When school starts in September we will send another mailing asking for return of the questionnaire or for other commentary on the book. We also will telephone a representative sample of recipients and ask for responses over the phone. We hope to have a more substantial assessment of the book's usefulness by October 15, and we will submit that analysis at that time as Appendix A to this report.

Section 2. Summary of Documentation of our Information Exchanges.

Although our primary responsibility from October 1974 to May 1975 was producing a book about teacher' centers, we also devoted time to experimental, informal networking with centers people (many of whom we had met in the Summer 1974 visits which are documented in the First Milestone Report) and with educators outside teachers' centers: in universities, state and local and county school districts, professional associations, teacher organizations, R & D organizations, and funding agencies. These onlookers were interested in researching centers, developing their own centers, or adapting the teachers' center experience into alternative forms of teacher training.

Our interactions can be categorized under three main topics. These topics are some of the functions in information sharing which we had cited in the First Milestone Report as having been suggested by experienced teachers' centers: 1) providing information about centers, answering questions, making referrals to people and places with expertise, and linking people with shared concerns; 2) increasing exchanges of curriculum materials, program reports, research monographs, films, relating to teachers' centers and 3) facilitating visits to centers.

A summary and examples of these personalized information exchanges are contained in Appendix B. This experience of information exchange tends to confirm the definition of networking which we have emphasized above as well as to corroborate the expressions of interest in information exchange which we heard from teachers' center people in Summer 1974 and reported in the First Milestone Report. Appendix B thus illustrates and partially substantiates the recommendations for a networking agency which follow in Section 3.

However, the documentation does not show in any consistent fashion what resulted from these interactions, what our correspondents did with the information we provided. Evidence of such results or effects must be pursued and documented if networking is to be considered as an alternative dissemination mode.

Section 3. Recommendation to Plan and Start an Exchange for and about Teachers' Centers

The First Milestone Report detailed the interest among established teachers' centers in wider, deeper, and easier communications with each other and with newcomers who share their basic premises. In Exploring we emphasized that we think these shared premises are a prerequisite for networking and on page 7 offered a generalized statement of them:

> Teachers must be more than technicians, must continue to be learners. Long-lasting improvements in education will come through inservice programs that identify individual starting points for learning in each teacher, build on teacher's motivation to take more, not less, responsibility for curriculum and instruction decisions in the school and the classroom; and welcome teachers to participate in the design of professional development programs.

In Sections 1 and 2 of this report we have documented interest among people outside centers--college of education professors and inservice authorities in l.e.a.'s, s.e.a.'s, or county offices--to find out more about teachers' center practice.

At the same time the National Institute of Education (Group on School Capacity for Problem Solving), which has funded this feasibility study, has declared its intent to study grass roots teachers' centers as instances of locally generated and designed attempts to change schooling, and also has declared its interest in studying the phenomenon of informal information networks as an alternative form of disseminating education innovations.

Thus our basic recommendation is simply that the GSCPS bring these several strands of interest together by establishing a small agency that could sustain the informal networking now existent; elaborate the kinds of information and resources being shared; extend the network to others holding the same basic premises attributed to teachers' centers, and maintain documentation that could be used both to study networking as a new form of education diffusion, and to study the premises, practice, and productivity of teachers' centers as a form of professional development.

Why "Networking" rather than technical assistance

Because the Scope of Work for the Feasibility Study spoke of using a network to provide technical assistance, we have reflected about the possible differences in functions between an organization which would stimulate and facilitate networking among teachers' centers, and an organization which would provide technical assistance about them. The definitions of networking which we have cited above indicate that in a network the expertise and information to be conveyed reside in the network members themselves, and the determinations of who are the experts and how--especially whether--they are to be used are made by the network participants. The familiar forms of technical assistance which we have observed in earlier work (ALERT, Dissemination Casebook, Curriculum Development in Elementary Mathematics: 9 Programs) assume that expertise, as well as strategies for deploying it, are defined and decided by the staff of the technical assistance agency. We have also inferred that the technical assistance function is largely pre-defined and tactical in the Leadership Training Institutes which have been provided by the Office of Education and in the national "backup centers" which support OEO Legal Services programs. For instance, some prerequisites for effective technical assistance by a backup center have been pinpointed by Kenneth F. Phillips, director of the Berkeley center for housing law:

> ....high level specialized capability,...institutionalizing that capacity and ensuring its existence over time,...a strategy orientation addressed both to subject area requirements and political exigencies combined with tactical diversity,...subject area specificity, concentration of resources, selectivity of issues,... combining the functions of research, advocacy and technical assistance,...finding the considerable funding necessary for such operations, and, ...protecting them from the inevitable counter-attacks correlative to their effectiveness. *

These elements imply a centralized, strategic, advocacy organization, which seems to us quite different from the loosely and temporarily affiliated "configurations" or networks of information and resource sharers, each with idiosyncratic goals and peripheral commitment to the common concern, which Clark and Guba describe.** Technical assistance also projects, it seems to us, a much more focussed intent than the broadly-defined, non-prescriptive goals which link the interative networks that Parker analyzes.

> Whereas a broadly defined goal is necessary, specific objectives for achieving that goal must not be designated by the network, for disagreement among potential

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* Phillips, Kenneth F., Statement to the National Symposium on Corporate Social Policy, October 4, 1974, 10-11.

** Clark and Guba, pp. 54-60.

> and actual participants is likely to exist concerning any specific set of objectives. If some objectives are "endorsed" and others are rejected, some potential or actual participants will be excluded from the network. In order to operationalize its goal, an interactive network has only one objective--to assist participants in achieving their individually-designated objectives.*

The networking pattern, rather than technical assistance, is intrinsic to the innovation--open education--which has stimulated many of the teachers' centers we first studied (First Milestone Report). American teachers' center leaders Lillian Weber (CCNY's Workshop Center for Open Education) and David Hawkins (Mountain View Center for Environmental Education in Boulder) have written admiringly about the gradual spread of British open education through the networks of l.e.a. and government advisors and the reports they generated and circulated. As Weber wrote after her visit to England in 1966-67:

> The work of the local inspectors and H.M.I.'s is, in effect, a significant force creating similarities within the freedom of practice. Their task...is to make sure that communication remains open so that information and ideas can circulate. Sometimes they accomplish this by getting heads released for courses, for visits, or for the conferences...More often and more important, they have stimulated new ways of implementing 'informal' ideas by sharing the good examples they've seen.
>
> . . . They fostered the trying-out of the (informal) ideas, carrying news of all this work in their reports and in conversations with heads. The experiments themselves served as models which inspectors then suggested to others for visits and observation.
>
> In this setting, which allowed heads the freedom of action and developed an encouraging but non-interfering relationship, experiments had time to become complete and achieve depth. News carried in this unprescribed way was more acceptable as suggestion than formally prescribed change and was tried out with new variations and further experimentation. The isolated experiments developed within this freedom became models for the spread of a concept that molded all infant education.
>
> . . . The (government) reports have a very special place in what I have called the 'mechanism of dissemination'. Their unique role goes far beyond legislative acts or administrative rulings. They have been the texts, not to be separated from the major educational literature, for study of educational practice, studied not as prescription but as suggested illustration. They were the pivotal points of the evolving unity of concept.

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* Parker, p. 225.

> . . . A characteristic of this non-prescriptive literature was its derivation from the schools and the resulting interaction. Thus, case studies of experiments in schools were published as such, without trying to generalize to pronounce absolutes. The case was allowed to stand on its own and the generalizing and application was made independently and variously. New reports arose from these independent and various applications.*

Hawkins contrasts this manner of spreading ideas with the recent American experience of educational innovation through technical assistance, in which "improvement comes down from above or in from beyond."

> When a small boom of interest in "British Primary schools" developed in the United States, it was often taken for granted that there was some national plan guiding the new trend or some single center of radial influence. When on the other hand one actually hops from one part of England to another one gains the impression that rather radical improvements, still fresh in the minds of teachers and heads, are seen as being almost entirely local and autonomous....
>
> But when one backs off one encounters a sort of professional network of local inspectors or advisers, national inspectors, college lecturers, headmistresses and headmasters who get around. Such persons spend real time working in schools, they are involved in intensive holiday courses for teachers, they get to some national and regional meetings. They constitute a sort of professional circulatory system...**

We have stated that networking of this kind has been the pattern of diffusion also among American teachers' centers. We do not think this occurs because a pattern is deliberately copied from the English; rather we think that networking relies on the same developmental interactive learning principles that the open education centers advocate for teachers and children: the capacity and disposition to learn something new depends on the store of experience and knowledge already familiar to the learner, and a personally felt discrepancy or problem which becomes a stimulus to seek new information.

Without going more deeply into the matter we have considered that the distinction between networking and technical assistance is not just a fine point and that it is especially relevant to the experience, wishes, and resources of the informal network of teachers' centers we have been looking at. Our conclusion is that these centers are more likely to collaborate with the wider group interested in alternative forms of inservice, in the context of a network. That is why we recommend an agency which at least

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* Weber, Lillian, "Creating Tradition: The Mechanism of Dissemination," The Urban Review, Center for Urban Education.

** Hawkins, David, "The Bird in the Window," in his book, The Informed Vision: Essays on Learning and Human Nature, Agathon, 1974, 77.

in the beginning would perform functions limited to the communication of information and the exchange of personnel, and which would be called an "exchange" and not a technical assistance agency. The point is made also because, if the NIE intends to do research about networking as a form of innovation diffusion, it is essential to preserve the unique characteristics of the existing informal network among teachers' centers and not to distort or transform it in the process of trying to extend it. It seems to us that this will be possible if it is held firmly in mind that the glue binding informal networks together is agreement on ends and agreement to disagree on means.

Functions

The functions of an Exchange for and about Teachers' Centers are recommended to explore the dimensions of and to experiment with the dynamics of a network which expands to take in new participants without losing its essential character. These functions are as follows:

1. Collect, write, and circulate information materials about teachers' centers: books, monographs, curriculum materials, audiovisual materials, bibliographies, etc.

2. Set up an "information central" to receive and respond to requests for information and to make referrals among people interested in teachers' centers.

3. Arrange for and subsidize personnel exchanges and meetings among educators experienced in and interested in teachers' centers.

4. Document activities pursuant to the above functions and conduct research about the effects of networking and about teachers' centers as a form of inservice education.

Some tasks which we can foresee to start the first three functions are listed below. Others can be expected to arise from experience, so there should be provision to undertake new tasks as well.

- publish descriptions of teachers' centers in addition to those included in Exploring
- visit new teachers' centers
- identify and make contact with regional or topical groupings of teachers' centers (e.g., Chicago area, New York State) and offer materials, explore collaborative projects
- attend meetings and conferences on inservice and on curriculum development which involve teachers as co-developers
- respond to phone and mail requests for information about centers (organization, programming, finance, curriculum, evaluation, etc.)

- keep abreast of the literature relating to centers; edit and publish an annotated bibliography
- write and publish articles and reports
- solicit contributions of papers, program descriptions of centers, brochures, monographs, case studies, curriculum materials, and catalog and store these for circulation on request
- stimulate circulation of existing publications of and about teachers' centers
- make matches--put in touch people who have like concerns, match people with need to people with resource
- arrange and subsidize visits and internships by staff of one center in another center; and consultancies by experienced center leaders to beginning programs

Style and substance

Conforming to a networking rather than a technical assistance style of functioning, an Exchange would expect recipients of help to initiate their own requests, define their own needs for assistance, and as they develop share their strengths. Further, an Exchange would expect initial givers of help to be open to new ideas and to express continuing needs for assistance, but not necessarily to use the Exchange as a means for communicating with people they already know.

As we are discussing a network which already exists, it is important to keep in mind that the experienced networkers will continue their information exchanges and mutual problem solving efforts without going through an organized central agency. Thus most requests for information and referrals may be expected to come from beginning centers and people just exploring the idea. As noted by Jane Siegel, an evaluator of the Office of Education pilot teacher center project, officials in state and local education agencies and universities feel a "crying need" for an organized way to get information about teachers' centers and to meet and exchange ideas with teachers' center people. But there is no such crying need for a coordinator to inject a matchmaking presence into relationships among teachers' centers that are already communicating.

This does not mean that there are no ways an Exchange might help the experienced centers. The First Milestone Report (pp. 23-40) quoted their wishes for support for publication--nonprescriptive but authoritative reports of the kind Weber admired in England; for exchanges of curriculum materials and of personnel, through working visits or internships in each others' centers; and for mutual work by centers to strengthen their voice to the outside--gain lay and policy-makers' understanding of their premises and support for their programs.

(This awareness of continuing need on the part of the experienced innovators has not been typical of the technical assistance concept of diffusion in education. Conventional diffusion strategies usually assume that the innovation is fully developed and ready to be marketed and implemented. This is not at all the view of the developers of teachers' centers or of the R & D curriculum projects which have had major influence on them, such as the Elementary Science Study, the Madison Project, and others. These curriculum developers have conceived of their developmental task as ongoing, as teachers adapt the new materials.)

The status of teachers' center development today, as a vulnerable alternative experiment within an education establishment which is itself under-supported, poses a special set of needs on the part of the developer centers. An Exchange which seeks to gain the experienced centers' assistance to potential adopters must find ways to procure help for the developer centers. This help should take at least three forms, which are related: sustenance, spotlighting, and self-improvement.

The benefits which the developer centers might stand to gain from an Exchange are not suggested as additional tasks to those listed above but rather as contexts or themes informing those tasks, or perhaps as criteria against which decisions would be made about publications, meetings, referrals, communications media, etc.

Sustenance. Several of the longest experienced centers today face phase-out or fund cuts so severe as to distort their services beyond recognition. This has happened not because these centers have failed to prove their worth. On the contrary, they have steadily gained in teacher participation and have attracted allies and advocates among school principals, system supervisors, curriculum specialists, college of education professors, and parents. The centers' funding crisis is brought on by the general cut-back in funds for education. This misfortune affects not only the centers themselves and their own school districts; it is also a potential loss to educators elsewhere who look to these pioneer centers for ideas and experience in re-designing inservice. A priority for an Exchange would be to find ways to help sustain the most experienced centers.

Spotlighting. A basic problem in educational information networking is not the dearth of information but the plethora. So much is being written and said about education that it becomes almost impossible for the practitioner to sort out the wheat from the chaff. Only communications which strongly suggest applicability to a local need are likely to be attended to. Only language which turns listeners to reflect on their own experience and then to act, thus breaking the paralyzing cycle of endlessly re-processing words, can reward the investment by both broadcaster and listener.

Thus it would be essential for an Exchange to avoid increasing the flood of undifferentiated communications reaching educators. It seems dubious, for instance, to launch a regular general newsletter on teachers' centers. Calling attention to newsletters, journals, and other publications

already available and valued, and helping them to survive and reach a larger audience seems a more useful service for an Exchange.

Even the most attractive and inspiring publications about education blight rather than stimulate if they reinforce faddishness and deflect the concentration by which educators develop their own ideas, then root and cultivate them. If, as some critics say, American adults as well as children suffer from overstimulation, not understimulation, then less attention should be given to outside "news" and more to communications which stimulate inward delving to local experience and reflection. The latter style is inherent in teachers' centers relationships with teachers, and it should be emulated by an information agency disseminating the experience of centers. This means that an Exchange would hold a priority not only for providing requested information but for encouraging information-seekers also to look at home for promising practices and initiatives to foster. In terms of its effect on outsiders--parents and legislators especially--the Exchange would need to gather together and spotlight a few common themes: what many people in diverse places are doing to restore the centrality of the teacher in schooling and to repair teachers' responsibility and capacity to make meaningful educational decisions. An Exchange also should try to counteract impressions among laymen that education is a baffling maze of uncontrollable variables, a cacophony of arguers, and that no one knows anything to do about it but talk.

Self-improvement. Our acquaintance with experienced teachers' centers stems from a role of being listeners and reporters of their own expressions of need and aspiration, not of assessing their performance. Thus the use of the word "self-improvement" is meant to suggest that in the operation of an Exchange the definitions of progress should be seen as coming from the field. Nevertheless, experienced teachers' center leaders know from their own work with teachers that a concept of learning which places a priority on the voluntarism of the learner must not make the mistake of over-estimating the capacity of the learner to diagnose need and initiate a commitment. The manner in which a new course of learning will benefit the learner must be expressed clearly, and the valuing of the learner's spontaneity and initiative in requesting help must be balanced with some means for articulating possibilities for progress and drawing together potential collaborators. An Exchange for teachers' centers should draw a close parallel on this style: not sit and wait for clients to call, but research needs, suggest possibilities, make extensions upon initial requests, draw together collaborators, locate peer teachers.

One such initiative by an Exchange might deal with the issue of voluntarism itself, as it relates to the problem of independent teachers' centers moving into school systems and performing substantial portions of regular inservice functions in return for hard-money institutional funding. This is a potential area for bringing about give-and-take learning among centers as well as between centers, and among centers and establishment educators and teacher organizations concerned with inservice. While most teachers' centers can cite compelling experience to show the failure of mandated inservice, relatively few exhibit confident technique in conveying their services convincingly to uncommitted teachers. Thus

teachers' voluntarism may be a frail prod towards large-scale participation in a center. If a center is unwilling to go along with administrative mandates for teachers' participation, it must negotiate a way for participation to be compensated for or to be scheduled during working hours. Or it must step up public relations and increase attention to the most mundane details of publicity. There are a lot of experience and techniques to share around a widened network.

Another potential area for an Exchange to foster further self-improvement by experienced centers is that of center staffs' desires for further professional education. Internships for center staff in other centers attached to universities already have provided instances of valued give and take; the intern or fellow provides pragmatic competency in teaching teachers in return for grounding in theory and philosophy of education to apply to the further development of a center. An Exchange should try to offer more such opportunities. Also, internships as instructors in centers could be offered to those long-experienced teacher-participants in centers who now want to step from classroom teaching to teaching other teachers.

Further development of curriculum within centers is another need an Exchange could articulate by offering to sponsor an institute or several study groups for centers' staff, researchers on teachers' and children's thinking, and professors involved in curriculum development.

The specific tasks which an Exchange undertakes to address these three themes of the developer centers' needs should not be determined in advance but should evolve from experience in networking.

Research

We have emphasized that the constituency which we have identified for a network of teachers' centers cannot be served in the manner of the technical assistance agency: expert prescribing for the beginner. Neither can an Exchange be effective if its style is simply to compile and offer information in the librarianship style of a clearinghouse. Instead, the style of teachers' centers toward teachers is recommended: peer-teaching, mutual exchanges of ideas and expertise, and collaborative problem solving. We do not know whether the functions and style we have projected can render the amount and kinds of assistance that are being called for by teachers' centers themselves, as they try to cope with the problems of a new level of development, and by the outside observers of centers who think their experience might help to reform inservice. Thus the fourth task which we stipulated for an Exchange was to document its work and conduct a research program on its effects. In the process of doing that, it should be possible to gather some evidence on the effects of teachers' centers themselves as a form of inservice.

Some of the questions which should be addressed by a research program are as follows:

Do new centers get started as a result of the Exchange? Do they reveal characteristics similar to those cited in Exploring as definitive of teachers' centers? Do new centers produce outcomes in teachers similar to outcomes in participants at experienced developer centers? Can these characteristics and these outcomes in the new centers be traced to participation in the Exchange? What kinds of contacts and referrals and information products provided by the Exchange have proved effective, for what purposes, in what circumstances? How does participation in an extended network affect the developer centers? Do they gain new ideas, new programs, and if so from where?

The intent of a research program should not be to make comparisons of networking as a form of education diffusion with other systematic forms of diffusion but rather to explain how networking acts as diffusion and to find out to what extent it can be formalized, subsidized, and used for specific purposes without distorting its natural benefits to originators.

The research program should be designed in the context of a larger question about how to improve schooling: whether local idiosyncratic "problem-solving" by school people results in greater improvements than efforts to import "validated models" for change. We believe that a diffusion technique relying on networking is closely related to the problem-solving approach. Some evidence for this belief is available in The Rand Corporation's Change Agent Study, which concludes that imported validated innovations are usually overwhelmed by local implementation problems, and that those change projects in which Rand researchers found the most evidence of improvement were those characterized by the "reciptivity of the institutional setting to change" and the flexibility and adaptibility of the innovation.* A research program on networking should try to discover whether the characteristics Parker attributed to participants in interactive networks are related to the characteristics the Rand researchers impute to successful problem solvers.

In Exploring we stated that the teachers' center development seems promising on many counts: it seems to be offering more experienced-based and thus more helpful ways to prepare teachers for the changed conditions in schools and therefore it seems to restore both their competency and their feelings of competence. From this adequacy, it appears, can stem increased responsibility and participation by working teachers in educational design and decision-making. The teachers' center also appears to offer a matrix in which practitioners, administrators, academicians, and parents can collaborate as equals, so that teachers' experience, academicians' theory and research, and community's mandates can be mediated and made mutually enriching rather than divisive. These appearances are promising enough to merit testing, so an experiment in diffusion which holds to the purposes and style of the teachers' centers themselves seems an important item for the educational research agenda.

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* Berman, Paul, et al. Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Vol. IV: The Findings in Review. Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1975, 9.

Scale

Small-scale, short-term operation of an Exchange is appropriate for reasons which should be obvious from the foregoing: An experiment designed to test a diffusion instrument that is defined as running mainly on participants' own energy cannot seriously project large or permanent infusions of outside energy. We have recommended an Exchange which would not substitute for the existing networking among teachers' centers but would sustain it during hard times, facilitate extensions if possible, document it, and then leave. However, in recommending modest proportion and temporary duration we do not mean to suggest skimpiness or haste. The functions discussed above are "customized": they call for one-to-one personal relationships, and these cannot be started and sustained on a brief-contact, once-over-lightly basis. Time is essential: to read widely, to write thoughtfully, to meet personally, to respond attentively and in detail, to document every "interaction." There should be provision for gradual start during a year devoted to making connections with the existing network and with likely newcomers, confirming needs and resources cited by the feasibility study, for gathering the basic materials to exchange, and for keeping documentation. Another year or two should be allowed for thorough experimentation with the functions outlined above and for exploration of the initiatives from the field. All of this activity must be documented. Overlapping with this stage and extending past it for a year or two should be a period for conducting the research program and for dispersing the coordinating services which are valued into other organizations or existing sub-networks.

At the start an Exchange should be nationwide in scope because the existing informal teachers' center network is nationwide and the potential wider constituency is national. However, the project should expect that networking relationships which prove to be self-sustaining probably will be limited in numbers of participants, either geographically or by topic. National Exchange activity should not inexorably expand into one big national super-network. Rather, growth in contacts by the Exchange should be accompanied by decentralization and phasing into regional networks or topical task forces, such as the North Dakota Study Group, math centers network, Chicago area network, Educational Arts Association, etc.

Staff and resources

A staff would be required, and funding for an office, long-distance telephone and travel, collecting publications, and editing, writing, and publishing others. A fund for subsidizing travel, consulting services, and publishing activities by network members should be provided.

From our experience of information exchanges during 1975 we estimate that in the first year of an Exchange two or three full-time professional staff would be required to begin an information and referral program among the existing teachers' center network and those people and organizations who have expressed interest to us. Support people would be needed for secretarial and publication production services and for beginning

documentation activities. If the Exchange proves to be useful during a first year, its staff would need to at least double both to carry on its increased program and to conduct research.

Exchange staff should have broad acquaintance with existing teachers' centers and with educational institutions and professional organizations currently expressing interest in centers and alternatives to conventional inservice. Besides such knowledge of the field, staff members should possess capacity for articulating needs and communicating centers' program, and disposition to be responsive to requests from the field. Document collection and accessing; reporting, writing, editing, annotating, publishing, film-making (possibly); group leadership, program planning and management, and public relations skills would be required. The research effort suggested would require staff with background in observation, interviewing, and descriptive documentation, data collection, and analysis rather than statistical measurement.

Because of the NIE's expressed interest in networking and in teachers' centers it is proposed that funding for an Exchange originate with the Institute. However, as our feasibility study was begun by the joint initiative with NIE of foundations which have supported teachers' centers, an Exchange should also seek supplementary funding from these foundations. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation have expressed interest in supplementarily funding a networking program.

Evaluation of the staff and the activities of the Exchange would not be easy because a successful interactive network will show its worth mainly in terms of participants' increasing (and increasingly self-sufficient) exchanges of their own ideas and insights. Whatever "products" an Exchange staff produces should be measured in terms of facilitation of participants' communications, not on their own terms. To the extent an Exchange staff felt obligated to produce its own products, it would neglect the reading, researching, responsiveness to the field that would be necessary to gain high involvement by participants; and it would tend to hold on to the functions we have suggested for the Exchange rather than working to disperse them into self-sufficient subnetworks and professional organizations. Contract officers and program monitors for an Exchange would need to understand if not endorse the networking approach and work in partnership with Exchange staff to develop consonant criteria for evaluation of personnel and accountability for expenditures.

Organization and decision-making

The functions for an Exchange which were discussed earlier represent an agenda which the feasibility study has compiled from expressions from the field: from experienced teachers' centers and from officials and educators seeking alternative forms of inservice. This agenda requires some coordinating organization and financial provisioning, as outlined immediately above. However, the first Milestone Report documented (pages 13-21) the reservations felt by leaders of the developer centers when they

were asked their opinions about a national information and resource-sharing agency among centers. Frustration and distrust of bureaucracy, the lack of personal relationship, trust, and common focus in big organizations, were common themes. These views are echoed in Vito Perrone's June 1975 report on the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, an informal network to which belong many of the centers visited in the First Milestone Report.

> Ought the Study Group take a more formal organizational pattern? (or is it too loosely organized?)...From my perspective, there appears to be little interest in formal structure. (This ought not to suggest that some coordinating activity has not been desired. For the moment, coordinating tasks are being carried out within the Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota.) The pattern which presently exists provides an effective means of communication on a level which encourages personal relationships, sharing of resources and voluntarism. Participants are able easily to establish individual directions...From my point of view, considerable enthusiasm and a high level of morale have been generated because hierarchical relationships, the bane of most formal structures, are absent.*

If the basic constituency of an Exchange were to be only such teachers' centers as belong to the North Dakota Study Group, organization would be no problem, for these centers' communication patterns are already established and fruitful, as Perrone has indicated, on the basis of their common commitment to open education. But we have stated our recommendation to try to extend networking to educators who are interested in teachers' centers as a teacher-responsive and teacher-interactive form of inservice and who do not necessarily endorse the open education centers' developmental view of learning. A wider net implies greater diversity of belief and purposes among participants (as we noted in earlier citations from networking analysis), and carries the possibility for disagreement about the means for attaining the broader purpose of designing new formats for inservice.

One way to organize such a diverse constituency for action is to assemble a representative group to set policy and draft procedures for making decisions. The peril here is that if the participants represent diverse and partially conflicting or competitive interests, the problem of the new organization's structure may precede and overwhelm its function. Parity in decision-making may become the main focus of initial effort rather than the goal of serving teachers through centers.

Another way to organize an Exchange would be to fund a staff, provide them with directives as to initial program and policy spelled out in the contract, and instruct the contractor to begin building a constituency

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* Perrone, Vito. A Report to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Grand Forks: North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, University of North Dakota, June 1975, p. 1.

of participants in the program. A later item on the staff's agenda then would be to draw representatives from that constituency into a governance body which could revise policy and organization as needed. In fact, this is a pattern we have seen among the developer centers and commented upon in the First Milestone Report and Exploring: Organization structure and governance policy take shape from experience with program and participants. A peril in this approach is that the constituency may never develop beyond an in-group, and the program may not be used--or may be actively opposed--by those who perceive themselves to be outsiders. This possibility seems part and parcel of the whole networking experiment; the ability to gain a constituency, the identities of that constituency, the interactions among participants, and the necessity or dispensability of conventional organization are all aspects of an Exchange to be tried out and tested rather than prescribed in advance.

If an Exchange is begun without a formal representative governance body, it might need an informal advisory body which would include people drawn from the various constituencies the feasibility study identified but not delegated from them or formally representative of a particular point of view. Among those represented might be developed teachers' centers, colleges of education, inservice officials from local and state education agencies, teacher organizations, foundations. Such an advisory group should also include working teachers and persons interested in networking as diffusion. This group without formal powers could advise staff and help evaluate them during the first year of an Exchange's operation or for as long as it takes to resolve questions of policy and participatory decision-making.

In thinking about governance, it probably would be helpful for an Exchange's staff to heed the advice of A. J. Light, Joint Secretary for Curriculum Development of the Schools Council in England. This is the quasi-official, collaborative organization among central government, local authorities, and educators' organizations which has spearheaded the development of teachers' centers in the United Kingdom. Light comments, "There is no point in establishing a vast communications system that takes so much coordinating nobody has the energy to do anything else." Recalling his experience in the growth of the English centers, Light singles out a crucial condition:

> We had one thing in common: to learn from each other. We met on neutral but professional ground. This unique ethos--and it's the ethos that is important--has been preserved. It enables people of differing status in the educational profession to drop status and institutional prejudice and work together. Also we have been fortunate in having leadership by people who were able to act in a professional way without pulling rank, to operate on credibility as helpful people, to facilitate interchange and gather people together.

Light's commentary about a certain inevitability and imponderability in networking is also worth heeding, for the sake of staff perspective about the role and dimensions of an Exchange.

Just as an individual has a threshold of readiness to accept a new idea, so do organizations or school systems. People who get to the take-off point do so at the same time as people in other places. The point is that when they get to the take-off point you need to have ready the resources and leadership to offer them.

But don't try to systematize the unsystematic; don't try to modify and classify the creative energies of teachers. We have been trying to find bureaucratic systems to disseminate good practice. But ideas don't flow through delivery systems alone. They flow in the most odd ways.*

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* Conversation with the writer at Wayne State University insitute on teacher centers, Detroit, June 9, 1975.

Appendix A. Responses to the book, Exploring Teachers' Centers
(As of October 15, 1975)

In June 1975 questionnaires were enclosed with 198 complimentary copies of the book mailed to teachers' center leaders (71), to college (43) and State Department of Education personnel (15), to principals and local school district inservice departments (46), and to members of teacher organizations (23). A follow-up letter requesting return of the questionnaires was mailed in early September. (Copies of the questionnaire, covering letter, and follow-up letter are included at the end of this appendix.) By mid-October 50 questionnaires, or 25 percent, have been returned. In addition to questionnaires, we have received six commentary letters and one phone call reacting to the book. These raise the return rate to 28 percent. However, in the analysis below, only questionnaire responses are counted.

We have speculated about reasons for what is to us a disappointing response rate. It may be that some respondents have not yet had adequate time to reply. Books were mailed during the summer when many recipients were away from their offices; we learned from several that they did not receive the book until September, and it is not the sort of book one sits down immediately to read all in one sitting. Several also said that they had either not received or had misplaced the questionnaire. We also have experienced that several centers' people make it a conscious practice not to respond to written requests for information about their programs because they simply do not have time "to do other people's research for them." In any event, we continue to receive comments and questionnaires in dribbles, and we will compile these responses to inform future decisions.

As expected, the largest return rate, about 50 percent, was from people whose centers were described in Exploring, and the smallest, around 20 percent, was from teacher organizations, centers not included in the book, and local education personnel.

Analysis

Among the total group of respondents, 68 percent claimed substantial familiarity with the text, and 24 percent said they had "sampled several portions." All of these saw value in the book. Sixty-two percent checked that it was valuable in assisting their search for further information about centers; and 78 percent checked that it "enriched their thinking" about revising their programs, designing new patterns or processes for preservice or inservice. Sixteen percent of these respondents volunteered comments about specific uses they were making of the book (for their own research, for planning site visits, for a state task force revising inservice patterns, etc.). All respondents indicated they thought the book would be useful as a future resource.

Critique of the Intorductory Essay

Eighty-six percent of the respondents indicated agreement with the questionnaire item stating that the introductory essay presented a balanced representation of inservice issues, and 71 percent checked that the essay contained thought-provoking ideas and insights. (Twenty-four percent did not respond to the latter question.)

Critique of the Format for Describing Centers

Respondents noted that the format and organization of the profiles on centers were helpful to them in sorting out differences among centers (68 percent) and in clarifying the definition of teachers' center (48 percent). The latter purpose was designated as important by 72 percent of those not currently active in a center. Eighty-two percent of all respondents said that the content of descriptions was fully informative. Only 12 percent judged that entries should have contained more information about each center, and 14 percent advised that they would have preferred shorter descriptions. Five respondents would have preferred a directory with very short descriptions.

Guidelines for Volume Two

Most respondents (82 percent) noted that their ideas or actions about centers could be extended or elaborated by reading a second volume of the book, containing more descriptions of centers and issues papers. This high response indicates they would value a second book but it is not clear what format it should take. Thirteen respondents (26 percent) said they'd like to have descriptions of more centers. Among these 13, nine prefer the format remain as it is, three recommmend it be lengthened, and one suggests a revised format. From the written commentaries following this section of the questionnaire, and from letter and phone call commentaries, we have gained suggestions for an index, for grouping the entries according to style of program or organizational structure. We also find concern about the obsolescence of descriptions as centers quickly change. These comments will inform our decisions about our second volume. But we do not consider the questionnaire data to be sufficient to give us a definitive answer about format and content of center descriptions in a second volume.

Functions for a Networking Agency

Respondents were asked what functions of a teachers' centers' exchange they might use. For this analysis returns have been divided into two groups: One includes respondents indicating active participation in a center (29 returns, or 59 percent); and the other group indicating those not involved in a center at present. In the second group two people said they had never heard of centers, eight said they were interested in learning more, and 11 noted they were exploring the idea.

As the following chart indicates, all suggested functions were viewed as useful by a large percentage of both groups.

FEASIBILITY OF A NATIONAL "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND NETWORKING AGENCY"

13. The following functions for a "technical assistance and networking agency" about and among teachers' centers and staff development programs have been suggested during a survey of teachers' centers. If cost were no barrier, which might you use?

ACTIVE	INTERESTED	TOTAL	
52	67	64	a. continuing descriptions of centers, new program trends, reviews of the literature
66	62	64	b. inquiry center to answer questions, make referrals to people and places with expertise, and link people with shared concerns
66	48	58	c. exchange of curriculum materials, program reports, research monographs, films, relating to teachers' centers
55	23	42	d. task force or study group on problems of governance, finance, in teachers' centers
79	52	68	e. facilitation of short or extended visits to centers by people new to the concept, staff exchanges among centers, internships in centers for people wanting to start their own centers
59	57	58	f. sponsorship of institutes or study groups on topics such as curriculum development for inservice education/teachers' centers; centers' input into state certification requirements; school district/university collaboration for inservice

The only function that illustrates disparate concerns deals with a task force or study group on problems of governance and finance in teachers' centers. It is certainly not astonishing that the issue is seen as most directly relevant to those active in centers. Comments--both on questionnaires and in letters--indicate further functions for a networking agency--development of an

annotated bibliography of theses and research papers, exchange of curriculum materials on teachers' centers and on open education; data bank of consultants; publication of a newsletter; data gathering about state and national efforts to support centers; and political activity on behalf of centers--legislative, policy statements.

We consider the response pattern, taken as a whole, to indicate a felt need for a networking agency fulfiiling such functions, not only in the community active in centers, but also among those educators who are becoming interested in teachers' centers as alternative forms of inservice.

Appendix B. Networking Documentation during January - July 1975

Our records of this period consist of a separate "contact card" for each of 65 teachers' centers (or organizations conducting similar kinds of inservice programs) which we have visited, talked with at length, or been referred to by someone we know who has visited. Also included in our records are contact cards for 56 individuals or organizations who during this time were actively seeking information about centers--these are teachers, teachers of teachers, professors, researchers, NEA or AFT or other professional organization staff, district administrators, state or federal bureaucrats. (Lists of these centers are included at the end of this appendix.) During the January - July period we were in communication with 44 of the centers (or inservice programs) and with 46 of the interested outsiders; with some centers we had as many as 19 communications, with others one or two. The contact cards show that sometimes a single letter or phone call would cover several topics; or conversely that several communications would take place over time about a single subject. Thus, we cannot arrive at a total number of separate contacts but rather we report interactions in each of three categories of networking and point out that some of these are duplications.

The categories are three recommended functions (First Milestone Report) for an information service for and about teachers' centers: 1) Answering questions about teachers' centers or programs within centers, making referrals to people and places with experience, and linking people with similar concerns; 2) Circulating information products: our own reports as well as research monographs, journal articles, program reports and brochures from centers, center-developed curriculum ideas, etc.; 3) Facilitating visits among teachers' center staffs, or by interested beginners to experienced centers.

We have not counted the contacts we had with people who were sponsoring the feasibility study, nor communications attendant to writing descriptions of centers for Exploring. Nor have we counted as "interactions" our conversations with people at conferences we attended during this time (North Dakota Study Group, AACTE, AERA, Airlie House, Educational Arts Association/Seattle, Wayne State/ATE Teacher Center Seminar) unless these contacts were followed by requests or initiation of further information to us during the January - July time span. In purely informal networking, in which the networking agent does not attempt to press early or rapid communications, there may be a long lapse of time between an initial contact and a follow-up request, and some contacts, of course, never develop into communication.

Networking Function 1: Answering requests, providing information, making referrals, linking people.

83 Interactions.

Of these, six were about new programs being started in experienced centers;

12 were about starting new centers; four involved writers requesting material or critique of manuscripts; six dealt with participation in seminars about centers (AACTE); and six involved center-related research. The rest were truly miscellaneous exchanges, ranging from mailing lists (offering our list of teachers' centers to North Dakota Study Group for disseminating the evaluation monographs) to writing an endorsement letter (Devaney to president of University of Colorado on behalf of Mountain View Center).

At the beginning of our experience with networking we assumed that centers with established programs would not frequently call or write us for referrals because they already were in touch with people whose opinions and experience they valued. With these people, the communication dynamic we expected was that we would ask them for information or would volunteer information to them when we learned of common concerns. We did have these kinds of communications but we also found that experienced centers offered us information and referrals (Creative Teaching Workshop sent us an article on Teachers' centers from The Instructor and referred the Fordham/District 3 center to us). And we found that our most frequent communications were with centers who were planning new programs and searching for comparable experience. (Example: Education Confederation, St. Louis, planning a new advisory service, thinking about a workshop space for teachers, concerned about evaluation, interested in a mobile science van, asked us for help on all those topics. We referred them to CCNY Workshop Center, Kansas City Learning Exchange, Chicago Teacher Curriculum Workshop Center, North Dakota Study Group; we sent journal articles, proposals; and received back Confederation reports and proposals.)

Thus, the nucleus group of contacts were the experienced teachers' centers whom we had met during the first phase of the project, the Summer 1974 interviews, and the dynamic was not just that we sought information from them; they volunteered communication with us, both to offer and to request information. Of the 46 centers we met during the Summer 1974 survey, 25 continued in communication with us during the January - July 1975 period.

Beyond this nucleus were new centers and the people actively investigating possibilities for starting similar programs. These "potential adopters" and those other inquirers whose interests were research or writing found us by a variety of means: previous acquaintance, other centers, ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, Far West Laboratory promotional activities or staff, professional conferences, foundation and NIE project officers, and our book Exploring Teachers' Centers.

Networking Function 2: Circulating and exchanging curriculum materials, program reports, research monographs, films, etc., related to teachers' centers.

23 Transactions.

We have not counted individual items we sent or all the separate references and citations we provided but rather transactions. Some of these were two-way

exchanges: we sent one or more documents or references and got something back. Some transactions were multiple, involving our sending, our receiving, and our stimulating exchanges among several centers. Still others were one-way transactions: we vonunteered materials or references because we knew of interest in a topic; or a center volunteered to us.

The count of 23 does not include all the materials we sent to follow up information we provided as part of Function 1, reported above. (As part of Function 1 we sent our own reports, previous writing--especially Developing Open Education and Exploring, as well as brochures, program reports, calendars, newsletters, articles, proposals from centers. (For instance, responding to Educational Confederation's inquiry about advisories we sent articles by Lilian Katz, Mountain View Center's four-year report, specific references to Lillian Weber's writing in Notes; and they sent back their proposals and reports.) What we have counted in Function 2 are transactions that primarily and simply involved prepared media (print usually--though these could have been film, were it available) rather than our personal research and response. Among these were newspaper clippings about the "Roots of Open Education" conference coverage in the New York Times, classroom cooking and environmental yard ideas and publications, xerox copies of articles such as that on geometry with tiles from Mountain View Center's Outlook, and monographs on evaluation instruments for children's oral language. Much of this activity was our offering of material we thought might be useful, based on our knowledge of a center's special curciculum focus or a need they had pinpointed.

Networking Function 3. Facilitating visits among teachers' center staffs, or by neophytes to experienced centers.

16 Referrals.

Six of these referrals grew out of Function 1 inquiries by three experienced centers planning new programs. For instance, the Chicago center, embarking on an internship program, asked for assistance in visiting Los Angeles centers and San Francisco centers. Four were responses to centers' people who were planning travel and wanted references to centers to visit in conjunction with their trips (for instance, Ed Gans of Culver City Open Space asked if there were centers in New Orleans, where he was attending a conference). Four referrals were assists to people visiting San Francisco and interested in centers (Ball State education professor sent to Park-South, San Francisco). One referral was to a SUNY Potsdam professor planning an ATE conference in St. Louis, and one was to Swiss mathematicians surveying active-learning mathematics development in the United States.

CONTACT CARDS - TEACHERS' CENTERS

CALIFORNIA

1. CIME Teacher's Center, Andrew Jackson School, Dan Diego.
2. Creative Teaching Center (Creative Publications), Mountain View.
3. Creative Teaching Center (Creative Publications), Sherman Oaks (defunct).
4. International Center for Educational Development (Virgil Howes), Encino.
5. Math-Science Teacher Center, Mira Vista School, Richmond.
6. Open Space Environmental Teacher Center, Culver City.
7. Park-South Teacher Center, San Francisco.
8. San Jose Teacher Involvement Project (CTA).
9. START Inservice Program (Bay Area Learning Center), Oakland.
10. The Teacher Center (Archdiocese of San Francisco), Menlo Park.
11. Teacher Learning Center, San Francisco.
12. Teachers' Active Learning Center, Oakland.

CANADA

13. Winnipeg Teacher Centre Project.

COLORADO

14. Mountain View Center for Environmental Education (University of Colorado), Boulder.

CONNECTICUT

15. Center for Open Education (University of Connecticut), Hartford.
16. The Teacher Center, New Haven.
17. The Teachers' Center at Greenwich.

D. C.

18. Advisory & Learning Exchange

GEORGIA

19. Atlanta Area Center for Teachers (Mercer University).

20. Atlanta Area Teacher Education Service (Emory University).

ILLINOIS

21. Nettelhorst School Advisory, Chicago.

22. Teacher Curriculum Work Center, Chicago.

23. The Teacher Center, Wilmette.

24. Teachers' Center Project (Southern Illinois University), Edwardsville, Belleville, and St. Louis.

LOUISIANA

25. Teacher Resource Service, New Orleans.

26. Innovative Teaching Center, New Orleans.

MASSACHUSETTS

27. Advisory for Open Education and Educational Arts Association, Cambridge.

28. EDC Follow Through Project, Newton.

29. EDC Open Education Advisory (Louise Hauser), Newton.

30. Greater Boston Teachers' Center, Cambridge.

31. Institute for Learning and Teaching (University of Massachusetts), Boston.

32. Integrated Day Program (University of Massachusetts), Amherst.

33. Resource Center, Children's Museum, Boston.

34. Workshop for Learning Things, Watertown.

MICHIGAN

35. CASTLE (Intermediate School District), Plymouth.

36. Inservice Education Department (Intermediate School District), Kalamazoo.

MINNESOTA

37. Minneapolis/University of Minnesota Teacher Center.

MISSOURI

38. The Educational Confederation, St. Louis.

39. The Learning Center, St. Louis.

40. Learning Exchange, Kansas City.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

41. Teacher Learning Center/Follow Through (Far West Laboratory), Lebanon.

NEW JERSEY

42. Center for Open Education, Tenafly.

NEW MEXICO

43. The Learning Center of Sante Fe.

NEW YORK

44. Center for Learning, Great Neck.

45. Child Development Resource Center, Great Neck.

46. Community Resources Institute (Brooklyn College).

47. Creative Teaching Workshop, Manhattan.

48. Learning Center of Community School District 3 and Fordham University, New York.

49. New Rochelle Learning Center

50. Project Change (SUNY), Cortland.

51. West Genessee/Marcellus/Syracuse Teaching Center, Camillus.

52. Workshop Center for Open Education and Open Corridor (CCNY), New York.

NORTH CAROLINA

53. Early Childhood Division, State Department of Public Instruction; Raleigh and statewide.

NORTH DAKOTA

54. Center for Teaching and Learning (University of North Dakota), Grand Forks and statewide.

OHIO

55. Greater Cleveland Teacher Center, Cleveland.

OREGON

56. Multnomah County Intermediate District (Jay Greenwood), Portland.

PENNSYLVANIA

56. Advisory Center (EDC), Keyser School, Philadelphia.

57. Philadelphia Teacher Center (Rasmussen), Durham School.

58. FRELEA, Pittsburgh.

VERMONT

59. ACCESS Education Center, Waterbury.

60. Adjunct Services Program of Prospect School, North Bennington.

WASHINGTON

61. Teaching-Learning Center, Seattle.

WISCONSIN

62. The Madison Exchange (Public Schools), Madison.

63. Junior High Mathematics Center (University of Wisconsin), Whitewater.

PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS

American Federation of Teachers, Eugenia Kemble, New York City.

Tom Ammiano, ESEA Coordinator, Buena Vista School, San Francisco.

Association for Childhood Education International, Monroe Cohen, Director, Washington.

Association for Supervison and Curriculum Development, Geneva Gay, Washington.

Association of Teacher Educators, Commission on Partnership for Curriculum and Instructional Development through Continuing Teacher Education, Brooks Smith and Dave Wallace, Wayne State University, Detroit.

Ann Atkin, Champaign, Illinois.

William E. Baker, Coordinator for Early Childhood, Alameda County Schools Department, Hayward.

Ball State University College of Education, Indiana, John Peightel.

Bank Street College of Education Follow Through, Elizabeth Gilkeson.

Bay Area Learning Center, John Favors.

Michael Bennett, graduate student, Ohio State University.

Elaine Boyce, Field Service Center, University of California School of Education, Berkeley.

CDA Math, Bob Beck and Barbara Dunning, Carmel, California.

Lucianne Carmichael, Principal, McDonough School, New Orleans.

Center for New Schools, Don Moore, Chicago.

Cynthia Cole, Lesley College, Cambridge.

Robert B. Davis, Director, Curriculum Laboratory, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Winston Dean, Grosmont College, San Diego.

Educational Testing Service, Developmental Research Division, Edward Chittenden and Anne Bussis, Princeton, New Jersey.

David Elliott, EPIE, Berkeley.

Exxon Corporation Community Development Program, George Aguirre, Contributions Advisor, New York City.

Harvey Goldenberg, Principal, I.S. 162, Bronx.

Rolf Gubler, Mathematics and Logics Consultants, Switzerland.

Dorothy Gutknecht, graduate student, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

Claire Helm, Catholic Office of Education, Washington, D.C.

Roz Hastings, Mt. Diablo School District, Concord, California.

George Hein, Lesley College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

IGE (Individually Guided Education), Jon Paden and Chuck Willis, Dayton, Ohio.

Illinois Office of Education, Department for Exceptional Children, Shirley Harris, Springfield.

Lilian Katz, Early Childhood Education Clearinghouse, Urbana, Illinois.

Theodore Manolakes, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Michigan State Department of Education, Teacher Preparation and Professional Development Services, Ed Pfau, Lansing.

Michigan State University, Department of Teacher Education, Yvonne Waskin, East Lansing.

Matthew B. Miles, Center for Policy Research, New York City.

The MITRE Corporation, Pat Chatta, Bedford, Massachusetts.

National Education Association, Instruction and Professional Development, Dave Darland, Bob Luke, Bob McClure, Washington, D.C.

University of Nevada College of Education, Learning and Resource Center, Kenneth Johns, Director, Reno.

North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, Vito Perrone, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

OECD/CERI (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Center for Educational Research and Innovation), Paris, David Thomas and Kim Taylor.

Oregon Math Education Council, David Raskin, Salem.

Rand Corporation, John Wirt (Washington), Dan Weiler (Santa Monica).

Jim Ratcliff, Washington State University Department of Education, Pullman.

Research for Better Schools, Philadelphia, Sue Merkin.

Rhode Island Teacher Center, Edward Dambruch.

Rural Education Program, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, Portland, Carolyn Hunter, Rowan Stutz, Susan Sayre.

St. Paul Open School, Joe Nathan and Betty Lampland, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Allen Schmeider, Pilot Teacher Centers Project, Office of Education, Washington.

Helen Sherlock, Edith Landels School, Mountain View, California.

Jane Siegel, Consad Research Corporation, Pittsburgh (formerly Evaluation Research Center, University of Virginia, Charlottesville).

South Dakota Department of Education, Inservice Education and Staff Development, Patricia Zigarmi.

Bernard Spodek, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Ernest Stabler, College of Education, University of Western Ontario, London.

Stanford Research Institute, Knowledge Production and Utilization Study, Harry Kincaid.

Diana Jordon Sundberg, Research and Demonstration Center, State University College at Potsdam, New York.

Texas Center for the Improvement of Educational Systems and Texas Teacher Center Project, Kyle Killough, Austin.

Sam Yarger, Syracuse Teacher Corps Project, Syracuse University, New York.

FAR WEST LABORATORY
FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

June 1975

Dear Reader,

This book is being sent free to a selected group of American schoolpeople concerned with new forms of teachers' professional development. It is an outcome of a study for the National Institute of Education (Group on Schools Capacity for Problem Solving) investigating the worth and feasibility of a national information and resource exchange among teachers' centers and innovative staff development programs. The book has been written to share some of the information and ideas gathered during the year's study, and also to stimulate expressions of opinion about the worth of such information and the potential for future resource exchanges. Thus a questionnaire is attached, inviting your opinions of the book and your assessment of the usefulness of this sort of information for your work.

A summary of responses to this questionnaire will be included in the final report of the study. We are enclosing a self-addressed envelope, and because of time pressures will appreciate your returning the questionnaire at your very earliest convenience. If you would be willing to be interviewed by telephone about your reactions to the book--in the next two weeks--would you please fill out the form at the bottom of this letter, tear it off and return it instead of the questionnaire. Please indicate in the same manner if you intend to forward the book to someone else.

Please view the book as an invitation to ask for more information directly from the teachers' centers described or from us. If the book raises questions for which you don't find answers, or suggests ideas you'd like help in pursuing, we will try to assist you and will welcome your communications.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Devaney and Lorraine Thorn
(415) 565-3097 (415) 565-3101

___I would prefer to respond to the questionnaire by phone interview.

_____
(Name, phone, suggest day and time of day we can most easily reach you)

___I am forwarding the book to _____
(Name, position, address)

___Please send me another copy of Exploring Teachers' Centers (check enclosed).

OMB No. 51-S75036

Approval expires 7/75

Exploring Teachers' Centers
Questionnaire

Name _____

Position
Teacher
Teachers' center staff
College of education staff
Inservice department of school district staff
Building administrator
State department of education or county office staff
Other _____

Address _____
_____
_____

Phone _____

1 How would you describe your acquaintance with teachers' centers before reading *Exploring Teachers' Centers*?

___a. never heard of them
___b. heard the term, had vague notion
___c. was interested in learning more
___d. actively exploring idea (reading, conferring, visiting)
___e. participating in a teachers' center--taking workshops, teaching workshops, organizing and running centers, etc.

2 What published information about the "teachers' center movement" have you read?

___a. none
___b. have read about centers in England
___c. have read Sam Yarger's and Allan Schmieder's work on "teaching centers" in *Journal of Teacher Education* and/or AACTE monograph
___d. have read *Scholastic's* 1973 directory of teachers' centers
___e. other _____

3 How well would you say you understand the contents of *Exploring Teachers' Centers*?

___a. skimmed the surface; get general idea
___b. sampled several portions; get the flavor
___c. digested substantial parts; assimilating

4. What purpose(s) do you expect the book can serve now?

___a. no further purpose(s)
___b. assist in my (or colleagues') search for further information about specific centers to (correspond with, phone, or visit); for instance, _____ _____ Center.
___c. enrich my (and colleagues') thinking as we revise our programs, design new patterns or processes for preservice or inservice.
___d. other _____

5. If you have taken *action* to carry out any of the purposes you checked in question 4 above, please describe briefly.

_____

_____

_____

6. Do you think your ideas or actions (in questions 4 and 5 above) could be extended or elaborated by reading a second volume of this book, containing more descriptions of centers and issues papers? ___ Yes ___ No

CRITIQUE OF THE *DESCRIPTIONS* OF CENTERS

7. The *organization* and *format* of the descriptions

___a. helps me sort out differences among centers
___b. helps clarify my own definition of what a teachers' center is
___c. is redundant
___d. is confusing

8. *Content* of the descriptions?

___a. is fully informative
___b. should contain more information on each center

(If you have checked this option, please suggest other categories to add or to replace the ones we have used--"What Goes On," "Purposes," etc.)

_____

_____

___c. should contain less information on each center

(If you have checked this option, please indicate what categories you would combine or delete.)

_____

_____

8. (con't)

___d. I would prefer very short treatments on each center and many more entries--like a directory.

___e. I would like to see additional descriptions of centers, written in this same format, or with the format changes I have suggested above (in b or c).

___f. I recommend the following centers be described in any further publication. (please give name and address)

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Comments on *Descriptions of Centers*.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

CRITIQUE OF ESSAY

10. Selection and balance of topics.

___a. good representation of inservice issues
___b. biased. (If you select this option, please explain why you think the selection is biased.)

_____

_____

___c. irrelevant to my concerns

11. Content

___a. fresh ideas or insights provoked my own thinking
___b. full of clichés
___c. ideas and analyses superficial, unconvincing

12. Comments

_____

_____

_____

_____

FEASIBILITY OF A NATIONAL "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND NETWORKING AGENCY"

13. The following functions for a "technical assistance and networking agency" about and among teachers' centers and staff development programs have been suggested during a survey of teachers' centers. If cost were no barrier, which *might* you use?

____a. continuing descriptions of centers, new program trends, reviews of the literature
____b. inquiry center to answer questions, make referrals to people and places with expertise, and link people with shared concerns
____c. exchange of curriculum materials, program reports, research monographs, films, relating to teachers' centers
____d. task force or study group on problems of governance, finance, in teachers' centers
____e. facilitation of short or extended visits to centers by people new to the concept, staff exchanges among centers, internships in centers for people wanting to start their own centers
____f. sponsorship of institutes or study groups on topics such as curriculum development for inservice education/teachers' centers; centers' input into state certification requirements; school district/university collaboration for inservice
____g. other (please list your suggestions) _____

_____

_____

____h. none

14. Comments; other suggestions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

FAR WEST LABORATORY
FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

September 9, 1975

Dear ...Reader?

(We don't know whether to address you as "reader" or not, because we have not received from you a questionnaire which we included in our book, Exploring Teachers' Centers, which we sent you last June.)

Did you get Exploring?

Did you look at it?

Did you skim it or read it?

We'd like to know what you think of it and would be grateful if you'd return the questionnaire (a return postage-paid envelope was enclosed), or drop us a note.

We need your opinion for our report to the National Institute of Education, which sponsored our work producing the book. We particularly would like to know whether you would value more information about teachers' centers--in a publication like this, through an information center, by means of personal contact, materials exchanges, or meetings.

Many thanks!

Kathleen Devaney

Lorraine Thorn

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